

THE REHEARSAL.

1. The Presbyterian Church before Calvin to be found only in *Almanzor's Kingdom of ME.*
2. The way to shorten Disputes.
3. All the Bishops since the Apostles were *Diocesan Bishops.*
4. And had a Plurality of Presbyters under them.
5. And the Power of Ordination, shew'd from *St. Jerom*, as likewise from the Nature of their Office as *Governors.*
6. An Answer to a late Book Intituled, *The Constitution and Discipline of the Church in the three first Centuries. All built upon his Mistake of the Meaning of One Bishop and One Altar.*

SATURDAY, December 6. 1707.

(1.) Country-man.

NOW let us see whether we are come to You propos'd a Short and Easy Question to the Presbyterians, to shew any Church of their Frame, that is, without Bishops, before Calvin. Instead of Answering which, they turn the Tables, and ask you to shew an Episcopal Church before the Reformation, except the Roman, or one since, except the English. And tho' asking one Question is not a Proper Answer to another, yet you have Answer'd it fully and plainly, and Nam'd Persons and Places. If they wou'd Answer your Question as Plainly the work wou'd soon be done. But I think it is done, because they have not Answer'd it, that is, because they Cannot. And now I see, as in a Picture, the first Presbyterian Church Rising out of the Ground at Geneva, amidst all the other Churches in the World, which were all Episcopal. Ther needs no Disputing, let us go to the Map with them. There let them shew us the Kingdoms and the Provinces that were Presbyterian. Let them see if they can there find out their Kingdom of ME.

(2.) Rehearsal. I desire, Country-man, to bring Long Disputes to a short Issue. Ther is in Every Question what we call *Jugulum Cause*, the Root or Heart of the Cause, upon which all the Rest depend. And if you can Judge right, and find this out, and Strike home there, the Work is done at once. But lopping of Branches is tedious Work, and they will grow again. No. Cut the Root, these will Withers of Course.

How many Books have been wrote, and what Jangling has ther been about the Ery-

mology of the words Bishop and Presbyter? And then they come in with their Sort of Bishops, and what Power they had, and whether they were Diocesan Bishops, like ours?

(3.) Country-m. This the *Observer* Reviv'd, N. 16. Objects. And you have said nothing to this Point of Diocesan Bishops.

Rehears. I shall be as short with that. Let them shew me any Bishop since the Apostles, who was not a Diocesan Bishop, that is, Bishop of a Particular Diocesi or District. I have told you already, That St. Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch, St. Polycarp of Smyrna, Irenaus of Lyons, St. Cyprian of Carthage, St. Athanasius of Alexandria, St. Augustin of Hippo, and so it was of all the Rest. Let the Presbyterians shew one Instance to the Contrary. I still keep to Fact.

(4.) Country-m. But the *Observer* asks if these Bishops had a Plurality of Ministers Subjected to them, the Power of Ordination, and Church Censures in their own hand.

Rehears. I answer yes. When St. Ignatius bids the Presbyters and Deacons be Subject to their Bishop as to Christ, were ther not then several Presbyters and Deacons under one Bishop? St. Cyprian Inflicted Censures upon his Mutinous Presbyters, and Asserted the Sublimity of his Episcopate over them, as himself words it. And it is plain Fact, That in those Great Churches, as of Antioch, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, &c. where ther were many Thousands of Christians, and many Churches, ther must have been more than one Presbyter to Officiate to all these, but we find still but one Bishop.

(5.)

(5.) And for the Power of Ordination, St. Jerom, whom of all the Fathers the Presbyterians most Quote, because of 2 or 3 Mistaken Expressions in him, and that Epistle of his (*ad Evagr.*) which they have often up, for the sake of that saying in it, *Quid facit—What do's a Bishop do, that a Presbyter do's not do?* But they wisely Drop the very next words, and which are Part of the same Sentence, *Excepta Ordinatione, Except the Power of Ordination.* That is, the Presbyters do Preach, Baptize, and Consecrate the Holy Sacrament, but the Power of Ordination St. Jerom here Excepts from them, and makes it Peculiar to the Bishop.

And indeed it is Necessary in the Nature of the thing, for the Bishops being Constituted Governors of the Churches, who but the Governor shou'd have Power of Placing others under him?

They may take the Advice and Assistance of their Presbyters or People, in making Choice of fit Persons, as a Governor may of his Garrison or Inferior Officers; but the Power is still in the Governor, and so St. Jerom places it here in the Bishop. And he closes that same Epistle with this saying, *Ut sciamus—That we may know the Apostolical Constitution to be taken from that of the Law, what Aaron, and his Sons, and the Levites were in the Temple, that same are the Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons in the Church.* And in his Epist. 54. contr. Montan. He says, *Apud nos—With us the Bishops hold the Place of the Apostles.* And (*ad Nepot.*) he says, *Esto subjectus—Be Subject to your Bishop, and Receive him as the Father of your Soul.* This is St. Jerom, whom the Presbyterians Delight to Quote, as on their Side.

(6.) Country-men. If they have no better Advocates than him; they will come short Home. And I suppose they wou'd not Quote him so much, if they had any other of the Fathers that Favour'd them more. But, Master, the same Observer Quotes a Learned Book called, *The Constitution and Discipline of the Church in the three first Centuries.* writ (as he says) by a Gentleman of thorow Conversation with Antiquity.

Rehears. I know the Book, it was lent me by a Dissenting Preacher. The Title made me Curious to Read it, and I had a value for the Author, as that Gentleman told it me, he is a Man of very good Sense and Learning, and has shew'd it more since in other things that he has wrote. And as am told, has Corrected his Opinion which he Advances in this Book, wrote when he was young, and being bred among the Dissenters, made this Essay to Reconcile them to Antiquity; of which he having greater knowledge now, has Recall'd that Book as much as he can so that it is not Easy to be had.

I was surpriz'd when I saw long Quotations in him out of Ignatius and others of the first Fathers, well knowing that he cou'd bring nothing out of them in favour of Presbytery, unless they had Manifestly Contradicted themselves. But I soon found the Mistake which had Deceiv'd him, which was that Expression of *One Bishop* and *One Altar* frequent among these Fathers. Whence he Infer'd, That a Bishop cou'd have no Greater a Flock than what cou'd Communicate at one Time, at the same Altar, and from one Hand. And each cou'd have no other than a Single Presbyter, or Pastor of a Single Congregation. And to these he applies the Name of Bishop, and supposes that there were no other Bishops then. And I remember (for I retain'd the Book, and have no Other) That putting the Objection of many Thousand Christians at Carthage (I think it was) and the like in other Great Cities and Episcopal Sees, who cou'd not possibly Communicate together at one Altar, or from one Man, or so much as Hear him Preach, he Answers that let them be never so Many yet they cou'd be no more than cou'd Communicate together because ther was but *One Bishop* and *One Altar*. This was plainly Involving himself in a Contradiction, that they cou'd not be so Many, tho' he Confesses they were so Many. And all this from a Mistake of the Word *Altar*, which signified the Communion of the Bishop, tho' in Distant Places and Churches, in Allusion to the *One Altar* at Jerusalem under the Law, and the *One High-Priest*, with whom the Synagogues in different Places, and all the Inferior Priests did Communicate, without Supposing their Personal Presence, which was Impossible, for the Temple cou'd not Hold them, far less cou'd the High-Priest in Person Administer to them All.

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